

FEATURES

Pro baseball player ends career, enlists in Marine Corps



Cpl. Alisha R. Fitzgerald
Private Jose Nunez Jr. (middle), Platoon 2094, Echo Co., 2nd RTBn., marches with his platoon during the Pass and Review portion of graduation practice Tuesday. Nunez, 27, played professional baseball for seven years.

After being an 11th-round Mets pick, a muscle injury forced Nunez out of baseball and led him to the Corps

CPL. ALISHA R. FITZGERALD
STAFF WRITER

Private Jose Nunez Jr., Platoon 2094, Echo Co., 2nd RTBn., graduates recruit training today after a drastic career move that involved ending a seven-year professional baseball career. Nunez was drafted right out of high school by the New York Mets as a short stop in the 11th round of the 1994 draft. Nunez, a 27-year-old Dominican Republican born in New York City, had a successful high school career. While playing in a league outside of high school, his speed and fielding percentage caught the eye of a Mets scout, and the rest was history. Nunez completed his final year at Miami Jackson Senior High School, after his family had relocated to Miami. There, he got to play alongside Manny Ramirez, leftfielder for the Boston Red Sox, who also attended the school. Nunez turned down seven different full scholarship offers to

turn pro, which he decided was a poor choice in hindsight. “I should’ve given myself more time to develop as a player,” he said. “My odds of making it in the big leagues would have been greater.” Nunez spent two years in the Mets’ farm organization, playing minor league ball. He was then traded to the Baltimore Orioles’ farm league. He played there two years before being traded once more to the Milwaukee Brewers’ farm league. He moved up through the ranks of the minor league, playing single A, double A and finally triple A ball. The season with the Brewers ended up being his last in the minor leagues, however, as he was released after a hamstring pull. “At 25, they decided I wasn’t much use to them any more after my injury,” said Nunez. “They needed a younger or more talented player to fill my spot.” Though disappointed about being released, Nunez did not give up. He continued playing professional baseball, first in the Northeast League, centered in the northeast region of the United States and part of the Independent Professional Baseball organization, and then in foreign leagues in Belgium and Canada. After playing abroad, he took a year and a half off. He almost tried out for the majors again, but talked himself out of it. “I needed to be a superstar to make it at the age that I was

then,” he said. “I knew it would be almost impossible.” After trying odd jobs back home in Miami, Nunez was dissatisfied with his current situation and decided he needed something more. His cousin, a Marine in the infantry, influenced his next move. “He told me about the great benefits and about the Marine Corps’ sports programs,” said Nunez. “A friend of mine that I played with in the Mets’ organization was also a Marine, and he gave me the name of his recruiter.” Nunez made the trip to a recruiting substation in Miami, where he found out everything he needed to know to make his decision in one visit. He originally was going to enlist as an infantryman, but changed his mind when his recruiter told him that particular military occupational specialties would not allow enough time for him to play sports like he wanted. He decided to go Motor Transport instead. After finishing The Crucible, the final training phase of recruit training, Nunez was excited about the upcoming graduation and seeing his family again. “I’m so happy right now,” he said. “My mom told me this was the best decision I had ever made, since I never got the opportunity to attend college.” Although he was an athlete his whole life, Nunez felt he exceeded his expectations of his abilities during recruit training.

“For baseball, we never run long distances, only sprints,” he said. “I never thought I could hike 10 miles, run five miles or even do as many pull-ups as I did.” Despite the fact that he was fairly mature at age 27 when he arrived at Parris Island, recruit training enabled Nunez to grow even more as a person, in more ways than one. “It changed my mental attitude towards life and made me more disciplined,” he said. During his 10 days of boot leave, Nunez said he plans to just relax at home with his family and eat plenty of his mom’s home cooking, especially her Spanish rice and beans. He is also looking forward to seeing some of the final games of the 2003 Major League Baseball World Series. After playing baseball for so long, Nunez said it is hard for him to claim one particular team as his favorite, since he loves the game so much that he appreciates all of them. Yet, he plans to root for the Florida Marlins in the series. “I played with some of the Marlins’ players when I was in the minors,” he said. “I was especially close with A.J. Burnette, one of their starting pitchers.” Even as a Marine, Nunez plans to continue playing baseball, hopefully on the All-Marine team. He said his baseball-playing days will not be over until the day he dies.

Standardized hardware and software highlight NMCI

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This is the final installment of a four-part series of articles designed to inform users of the upcoming transition to the Navy Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) environment. The Navy’s pre-Navy Marine Corps Intranet computing environment has been described by Navy NMCI Director Rear Adm. Charles Munns as the “Wild, Wild West,” where individual commands or claimancies were largely responsible for procuring, maintaining, and managing their own IT environments. The result of which was hardware, software, and infrastructures that were unable to communicate effectively and with varying degrees of security. In short, it created virtual chasm between the “haves” and “have-nots.” With the migration to the

NMCI, the DoN will, for the first time, establish a standard set of hardware and software applications, a single enterprise architecture, and standardized information assurance for the network and its workstations. This evolution will create an environment where the exchange and sharing of information is efficient and secure. Part of the NMCI migration is the deployment of new workstations to users. The process of identifying the equipment is determined by designated Contract Technical Representatives. These individuals review and determine the specific types of hardware and software to order for each NMCI user. This step was accomplished at Parris Island a few months ago with the deployment of the black DELL computers. Hardware, software and services are purchased through Contract Line Item Numbers and each seat order is priced based on the CLINs purchased from the end-to-end suite of services offered under

NMCI. NMCI users often misunderstand seat pricing by equating their “service” simply to what resides on their desktop – their machine and the software they operate – while ignoring what is involved behind the wall plug. As EDS NMCI Enterprise Client Executive Bill Richard explains, users should liken their NMCI service to the way telephone service is purchased. “You can go to any department store and buy a phone for \$9.95 but it doesn’t allow you to make a call,” said Richard. “You have to contract service through the phone company and there will be charges for the initial hookup, service, repair, and other options,” he said. “The NMCI provides not only the device but the full spectrum of services to support each seat in the NMCI environment. NMCI is the total package – hardware, software, infrastructure, connectivity, information security, maintenance, 24x7x365 help desk support, training, and staffing.”

Three types of workstations are available to users: **Fixed Workstations** The most commonly deployed workstations in the NMCI environment are fixed workstations that include a monitor, central processing unit, keyboard, and mouse. There are three types of fixed workstations available for order based on the functionality required. They are coded as red, white, or blue seats. **Portable Workstations** The NMCI portable workstations are NMCI workstations that allow users to connect to the NMCI network remotely. In addition to the laptop, the portable seat includes a separate monitor, monitor stand, port replicator and mouse for use as a standard workstation. NMCI Remote Access Service is available for portable users and gives access to the NMCI network through a dial-up connection.

Deployable Workstations NMCI deployable workstations are portable desktops and laptops periodically deployed and used in the expeditionary or field environments where rough handling and extremes in climate exist. Deployable workstations are capable of interfacing with IT-21 shipboard networks and the Marine Corps Tactical Network. Parris Island did not order any deployable workstations. Only NMCI workstations will be allowed to connect to the NMCI network. Other computers will be disconnected when Parris Island “cuts over” to the NMCI environment. Cut over is scheduled to start in November. All NMCI workstations are loaded with a baseline package of applications called the NMCI “Gold Disk.” The Gold Disk provides basic functionality requirements including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, electronic mail and calendar capabilities.

Additional applications in the Gold Disk provide virus detection, collaboration capabilities and multimedia software. Applications outside of the Gold Disk are called legacy applications. Legacy applications not included in the NMCI standard seat services or CLINs must pass a certification and accreditation testing process before they will be allowed to be loaded to an NMCI workstation. Testing ensures DoN security requirements are met and the application is Windows 2000 compatible. Applications that do not pass testing will not be available on an NMCI workstation. Instead, they will remain on a quarantine workstation – a stand-alone workstation, not connected to the network. The EDS NMCI team and Department of the Navy will continue efforts to engineer a method for the failed legacy application to be on the NMCI network.

RELAY,
Continued from Page 1

“It’s something that could happen to any of us, so we’re just here to support her,” said Staff Sgt. Faith Osborne, Support Bn. operations chief and former 4th RTBn. drill instructor. “It’s a reality check—it doesn’t matter how old you are,” added Sgt. Sandra Center, a drill instructor for Oscar Co. and Ham’s close friend. “You don’t really associate young women with cancer, but this should be a wake-up call for all women to stay pro-active. If they have any doubt, they should get themselves checked.” It was especially hard for Ham to leave the drill field — the job she loved, said friends. “She loved being a DI more than a lot of other DIs,” said Center. “It was really hard for her to leave. Being Sgt. Ham’s friend means a lot. It’s hard to explain. This is a good tribute to her because she was an awesome drill instructor.” Ham hung up her campaign cover and now spends most of her days resting and in chemotherapy, but said hearing about her fellow drill instructors support by running in Relay for Life meant a lot to her. “It was exciting and kind of funny,” said Ham. “I’m glad they still think of me. It’s great that they were out there supporting me.”

Ham, who is in the final stage of her cancer, said the doctors gave her only a couple of years to live, but she’ll continue to fight with the support of her friends and family. “There are some days when you can’t really do anything,” said Ham with a frail voice. “When I feel down, it feels good to get a phone call from someone. Having cancer is a struggling battle, but I try to keep my head up and stay motivated and not let it get me down. I’m going to keep fighting this ‘til the end.” At the end of the night and after numerous laps around the track, the drill instructors donated \$300 to the American Cancer Society to go toward cancer research. Ham may have hung up her “smokey bear,” but her fellow drill instructors continue to have hope and support her throughout her battle against cancer and remind her that although she may be gone from the drill field, she is certainly not forgotten. “We wanted to run to support Sgt. Ham as she continues to fight and prayfully beat this thing,” said Gunnery Sgt. Robin Fortner, series gunnery sergeant for Oscar Co., 4th RTBn. “She continues to have a positive attitude throughout this whole ordeal and that is truly a blessing. We want her to know that, ‘Once a 4th Bn. drill instructor ... always a 4th Bn. drill instructor.’”